

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method of storing and/or retrieving location-based information, the method comprising:

storing, in a distributed network of data storage devices accessible simultaneously from a plurality of remote user terminals, ~~indexing~~ data defining a plurality of ~~indexing~~ nodes ~~respectively representing different ones of a plurality of first localities in relation to~~ which information storage is accessible; and

selecting ones of said first ~~nodes~~ localities to represent second localities for which information is to be stored and/or retrieved such that:

i) said first and second localities bear a predetermined locational relationship; and

ii) said first and second localities bear a predetermined relationship in size, characterised by the step of distributing said ~~indexing nodes amongst a distributed network of data storage devices accessible simultaneously for users at a plurality of remote user terminals.~~

2. (original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said first localities are selected such that said first and second localities share at least one geographical location.

3. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said first localities are selected such that said first and second localities are similar in size.

4. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said data defines access nodes which include a node representing a relatively large locality and one or more nodes representing one or more relatively small localities which overlap said relatively large locality.

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5. (original) A method according to claim 4, wherein a plurality of said nodes representing relatively small localities form divisions of said relatively large locality.

6. (currently amended) A method of storing location-based information, the method comprising:

defining, in a distributed network of data storage devices accessible simultaneously from a plurality of remote user terminals, a plurality of indexing data access nodes each of which is responsible for a predefined locality, said plurality of nodes including a higher level node responsible for a larger locality and lower level nodes responsible for smaller localities which overlap said larger locality,

indexing references to information sources containing locality-specific information at said data access nodes, different information source references being indexed at said higher level node than at said lower level nodes; and

transmitting said references from said indexing nodes on request;

~~characterised by the step of distributing said indexing nodes amongst a distributed network of data storage devices accessible simultaneously for users at a plurality of remote user terminals.~~

§ 10 7. (previously presented) A method according to claim 6, wherein at least one information source reference is commonly indexed at said higher level node and said lower level nodes.

8. (currently amended) A method of storing location-based information, the method comprising:

defining, in a distributed network of data storage devices accessible simultaneously from a plurality of remote user terminals, a plurality of indexing data access nodes each of which ~~are~~ is responsible for a predefined locality;

indexing references to information sources containing locality-specific information at said data access nodes, one or more of such references being repeatedly indexed at different of said nodes; and

transmitting said references from said data access nodes on request;

~~characterised by the step of distributing said indexing nodes amongst a distributed network of data storage devices accessible simultaneously for users at a plurality of remote user terminals.~~

9. (previously presented) A method according to claim 4, wherein said nodes are interlinked in a network structure.

10. (original) A method according to claim 9, wherein said network structure is a hierarchical structure.

11. (original) A method according to claim 10, wherein said nodes are interlinked in parent/child relationships.

12. (previously presented) A method according to claim 10, wherein said nodes are interlinked in sibling relationships.

13. (previously presented) A method according to claim 10, wherein said nodes are interlinked in uncle/nephew relationships.

14. (previously presented) A method according to claim 10, wherein said nodes are interlinked in cousin/cousin relationships.

15. (previously presented) A method according to claim 11, wherein said interlinking comprises a node holding a reference whereby the related node may be accessed.

16. (previously presented) A method according to claim 4, comprising altering a distribution of said nodes amongst said data storage devices.

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17. (previously presented) Apparatus for storing location-based information in accordance with the method of claim 1.

18. (currently amended) A method of retrieving information for presentation to a user, the method comprising:

defining a locality of interest to the user in dependence on both a location of the user and a speed of travel of the user; and

selecting, in a distributed network of data storage devices accessible simultaneously from a plurality of remote user terminals, indexing nodes information sources from which locality-specific information may be retrieved, on the basis of the defined locality of interest;

~~characterised by the step of distributing said indexing nodes amongst a distributed network of data storage devices accessible simultaneously for users at a plurality of remote user terminals.~~

19. (original) A method according to claim 18, wherein the extent of the locality of interest of the user is altered in dependence on the speed of travel.

20. (original) A method according to claim 19, wherein the extent of the locality of interest increases with the speed of travel.

21. (previously presented) A method according to claim 18, wherein the locality of interest is altered in dependence on the direction of travel of the user.

22. (previously presented) A method according to claim 18, comprising deriving parameters relating to the travel of the user from a positioning signal receiver travelling with the user.

23. (canceled)

24. (previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said network of data storage devices comprises a plurality of servers interconnected by data links and forming a distributed processing environment.

25. (currently amended) Apparatus for storing location-based information, said apparatus comprising ~~means for storing indexing data defining indexing~~

a distributed network of data storage devices accessible simultaneously from a plurality of user terminals and defining data access nodes which are referentially interlinked, each said ~~indexing~~ data access node being provisioned with a locality for which it is responsible, and means for comparing the size of an input locality in relation to which information storage is to be accessed and a locality for which a said ~~indexing~~ the access node is responsible;

¹⁰ ~~characterised by the step of distributing said indexing nodes amongst a distributed network of data storage devices accessible simultaneously for users at a plurality of remote user terminals.~~

26. (currently amended) Apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said apparatus is reconfigurable by the addition of, or the removal of, one or more of said ~~indexing~~ data access nodes, so as to transfer responsibility from or to one or more other nodes with localities of responsibility sharing at least one geographical location.